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MIGRANT DAY CARE PROGRAM, 1961.

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WITH THE COOPERATION OF VARIOUS COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND WITH FEDERAL AID FROM THE PUBLIC WELFARE DEPARTMENT, SEVERAL MIGRANT CHILD CARE CENTERS WERE ESTABLISHED BY PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY IN THE CENTRAL PART OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA. STAFFS WERE COMPOSED OF DIRECTORS AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS FROM PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. PROGRAMS PROVIDED FOOD AND TAUGHT INDIVIDUAL DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TABLE MANNERS. THE CHILDREN ENJOYED THEIR FIELD TRIPS, AND IMPROVED BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS WERE OBSERVED. RESULTS INDICATED THAT THE PROGRAMS WERE CONSTRUCTIVE AND EFFECTIVE. COMMUNITIES HELPED THE PROGRAM BY PROVIDING VOLUNTEERS, HOUSING FOR THE CENTERS, EQUIPMENT, COMMUNITY CONTACTS, STORAGE SPACE, DISCOUNTS ON FOOD AND SUPPLIES, AND STAFF HOUSING. (JS)

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MIGRANT DAY CARE PROGRAM
1961

Operated by
Department of Child Development and Family Relationships
College of Home Economics
The Pennsylvania State University

To provide some harvest for the children of the reaper, The Pennsylvania State University operated six day care centers for the children of migrant agricultural workers during 1961. A total of 180 children were enrolled in these centers which extended through the central part of the state, with one center located in the southeastern section of Pennsylvania.

Location of Migrant Day Care Centers	Period of Operation
Sunbury, Northumberland County	July 17 - September 15
Mandata, Northumberland County	July 31 - September 1
Selinsgrove, Snyder County	July 31 - September 1
Biglerville, Adams County	July 5 - October 13
St. Thomas, Franklin County	July 31 - September 22
Cochranville, Chester County	July 17 - September 1

Some financial aid, equipment, materials and advisory help were given two additional centers enrolling 40 more children.

Location	Operating Groups
Ulysses, Potter County	Mennonite Volunteer Services of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities
Bath, Northampton County	Bethlehem Council of Churches Lehigh Valley Society of Friends

The summer of 1961 was outstanding for the surge of cooperation, expanded interest and volunteer aid of many different groups throughout the state. County migrant committees, church groups, growers, processors, business men and community citizens demonstrated an increasing awareness of the needs of migrant children and their desire to alleviate these through their cooperative support of the day care program.

Funds for the operation of the centers are federal funds obtained through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. These are allocated to provide protective care for children. Since, however, there are many school age children enrolled who are also in need of educational instruction, a private fund is

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raised each year to provide this, where necessary[1], within the framework of day care.

Grateful acknowledgment is due the Women's Student Government Association of Bucknell University and the Pennsylvania Citizens Committee on Migrant Labor for the donation of $300.00, which, with an anonymous donation of $200.00, paid one-quarter of a school teacher's salary in each center. Thanks are also extended to the group of Presbyterian Church Women of State College who contributed over $50.00. This money was used for the purchase of educational materials. Because of the generosity of these groups, the 1961 Migrant Day Care Program was enabled to provide educational instruction, as well as protective care, for its school age children.

Migrant Day Care in Action

Staffs for the centers included directors and teachers experienced in Nursery or Elementary Education. College students, interested community members and volunteers also assisted. A social worker was attached to each center by the Department of Public Welfare. Her duties included enrolling the children for the center, arranging physical examinations and other health services for them, as well as referral of the migrant families to local welfare and service agencies when help was needed.

The day care centers were open five days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Children ranging from 3-14 years of age were enrolled. The greater majority of the children attending the centers were in the 3-9 year age range. The program provided breakfast and a hot midday meal, health and educational instruction, training in simple skills such as sewing, cooking, and the use of tools. Field trips helped acquaint the children with various areas of community life. Music, art, and recreation were also included in the program.

School age children attended the centers until the local public school systems opened in September. They were then enrolled in the regular schools. The centers

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[1] Legislation was passed in 1961 appropriating funds to provide summer schools for school age migrant children by the Pennsylvania Legislature. These schools will be operated in counties where the number of children and the length of their stay in the area warrant such action. In 1962 two such migrant schools will be in existence, located in Adams and Potter Counties. Here, the migrants arrive in some number early in July and do not depart until October. In other areas of the State, the migrants arrive in August--too short a span of time before the local school systems open for regular session for the operation of a summer school. In these cases the school age children are enrolled in day care centers until they enter the local school system.

continued to extend care to preschool children in those areas where there were enough to warrant this extension of services.

Basic Program

8:00 a.m.	Arrival and breakfast
8:45 - 9:15 a.m.	Assembly Announcement of the day's program Singing Stories
9:15 - 11:15 a.m.	School age - Educational Instruction Snack
	Preschool - Creative activities Supervised play Snack
11:15 - 12:00	School age - Recreation
	Preschool - Supervised play
12:00 - 12:15	Clean-up and rest
12:15 p.m.	Dinner
1:00 - 3:00	Rest
3:00 - 4:30	Supervised recreation and play Craft projects and art activities Music Field Trips
4:30 - 5:00	Clean-up and snack
5:00	Departure

The response of the children to the centers was enthusiastic. A teacher reported, "As the children walked in the door that first morning, their faces lit up when they saw the toys and equipment. They weren't quiet or shy as we had expected them to be at first, but they ate and played freely and heartily. I sat at the table with the preschoolers and found it unbelievable that such little ones could eat so much food. The first morning they each had three or four bowls of cereal and at least two pieces of jelly and toast. The older ones finished first and dived for the toys. Then the younger children had a hard decision to make; should they keep on eating or go to the toys?

"That night, as the bus drove away, we heard the children yell, 'we like school' and 'we'll be back tomorrow.' These children were excited about the center. None of them had ever been in one before. Every other summer they had spent at the camps with little to do, or had worked in the fields with their parents."

These remarks help emphasize two outstanding characteristics of many of these

children; they are hungry[2]; they have had extremely limited experiences with toys, equipment or materials of any kind either manipulative, creative or educational. Again and again the teachers in the centers have mentioned this:

"In our art and hand work, it was evident that the children had had little previous experience with creative materials. We introduced clay, painting, finger paints, torn and cut paper collage. Their efforts were crude but original. Only a few of the second grade level groups knew how to use scissors, so many projects were planned for the purpose of developing simple skills; handling scissors, crayons, brushes and simple tools.

"The children's enthusiastic response to the activities and new materials presented was shown by E. L. He was so pleased with his first experience with peg boards that he filled his board with pegs then hid it in a cupboard. During the day, he went to look at it many times. Each time he peeked in at the board a happy smile lighted his face."

Most of the centers gave the children some duties and responsibilities. A director states, "The children took turns carrying their dishes and utensils away from the tables after meals and snacks. They were encouraged to help in putting away toys, in cleaning-up after activities, in getting out and putting away cots for their naps. We wanted them to feel that the center was theirs and that they were responsible for taking care of it."

Table manners were also taught the children. They watched the teachers and imitated them. (Many of the children have had little experience with tables or table settings, chinaware, silverware, etc.) In one county the mother of one of the day care children was so impressed with the carry over of this training to the migrant camp that she said she "reckoned they'd have to set up a table" when they got back to Florida.

School Age Program

Because of their limited experiences and academic retardation, the instructional program for school age children was a practical, concrete program emphasizing the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic through methods close to the children's abilities and interests. These children have difficulty with abstract concepts, so most of the programs were developed around everyday experiences and field trips.

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[2] In one center an open house was held for the children's parents. They were interested in everything, looking over the equipment and materials, the displays of the children's work, even going out to inspect the kitchen and talk with the cook. One man read the week's menu posted on the wall. (The meals served in centers are nutritionally well ba anced, but quite economical.) He turned to the cook and said, "I'm goin' right back to camp, pick up my bag an' move in here. I never saw such food in my life." And he probably never did.

One director reported, "We hiked to a farm and saw different crops, tractors, chickens, turkeys and all phases of hog raising, from day old pigs to fat swine just ready for marketing. This was a rich experience for the children. They talked about it for a long time afterwards. Too, the children were interested in the milk truck which delivered the milk each day. We showed them through the truck, then arranged a trip to the dairy. There we saw all phases of milk processing; from the moment the milk arrived in tank trucks from local farms to the time it was squirted into the milk bottle, ready for delivery."

At another center, social studies became a favorite subject when some college students from Africa visited the children. The students showed the children their native costumes and told about their country and the people and animals living in it. The children asked many questions, made native clothing for their dolls and also made bows and arrows. Later they were able to see some of the animals they had heard about from the African college students when they made a field trip to the Philadelphia zoo.

All of these experiences were used by the teachers to build the children's basic academic skills, as well as to expand their awareness of the communities about them. The children responded to these methods of teaching with eagerness and enthusiasm. As one director stated, "Of all the activities the children were exposed to they seemed to enjoy the school the most."

Benefits to the children enrolled in the centers were marked. These included weight gains, improved health, the development of both manipulative and academic skills and a growing alertness and interest in the world about them. There were also marked changes noted in the behavior of preschool children with some problems, as two examples reported by a head teacher illustrate:

"T. M., a four-year-old, entered the center as a sullen, disagreeable and extremely negative child who was unable to comply with any of the daily program. He spent much of his time destroying property, injuring other children and testing every limit. His response to freedom, responsibility and an abundance of affection each day was immediate and almost unbelievable. By the first week in September, he could comply with most routines and even return a friendly smile. Although there were still occasional periods when his former behavior was evident, T. M. showed marked progress.

"Another child, a three-year-old, spent his mornings in one continuous tantrum over the slightest provocation. Repeated, patient, logical explanations of each incident seemed to help him gain some mastery over these situations. As the summer progressed J even reached a point where he could offer someone a toy when he had finished. He would even smile and laugh voluntarily as he enjoyed some of the toys and the companionship of the other children."

That the day care center staff also gained from their experiences in working with the migrant children is shown by the remarks of one of the student-teachers: "Teaching migrant children is the most wonderful experience I have ever encountered. I only wish that everyone could have the opportunity to do it. It seems to me that no matter how good a job I may get after graduation from college, none will be as gratifying or rewarding as this has been."

The Migrant Day Care Program has developed into a constructive, effective effort to aid this highly deprived group of children thanks to the imagination, courage and dedication of the day care personnel, the community volunteers, the county migrant committees and other groups and individuals who have worked together to build this service.

Naomi LeB. Naylor
Coordinator
Migrant Day Care Program

HOW COMMUNITIES HELP

Church groups, local migrant committees, school systems, scout and service groups have given invaluable aid to the Migrant Day Care Program. To list a few of these, community groups have:

1. Provided volunteers
   - --to work with the preschool children each day
   - --skilled in some area of art, music, sewing or woodworking to give special programs and experiences for the older children
   - --to drive children to health clinics
   - --to take children on field trips which broaden their horizons
   - --to act as hostesses at the community open house held by each day care center

2. Helped locate, recommend, and provide housing for centers
   - --churches have provided the use of their church school facilities
   - --one county migrant committee provides a building that they had built in a migrant camp

3. Loaned equipment and donated materials

4. Aided with community contacts and education

5. Provided storage space for equipment

6. Saved hundreds of dollars for the program in discounts on the purchase of food and supplies

7. Helped locate and provide staff housing

Certainly all of these groups working together, adding a drop of compassion to a drop of opportunity, are cementing a path to a brighter future for these "children from nowhere."

ALFRED M. POTTS, 2d

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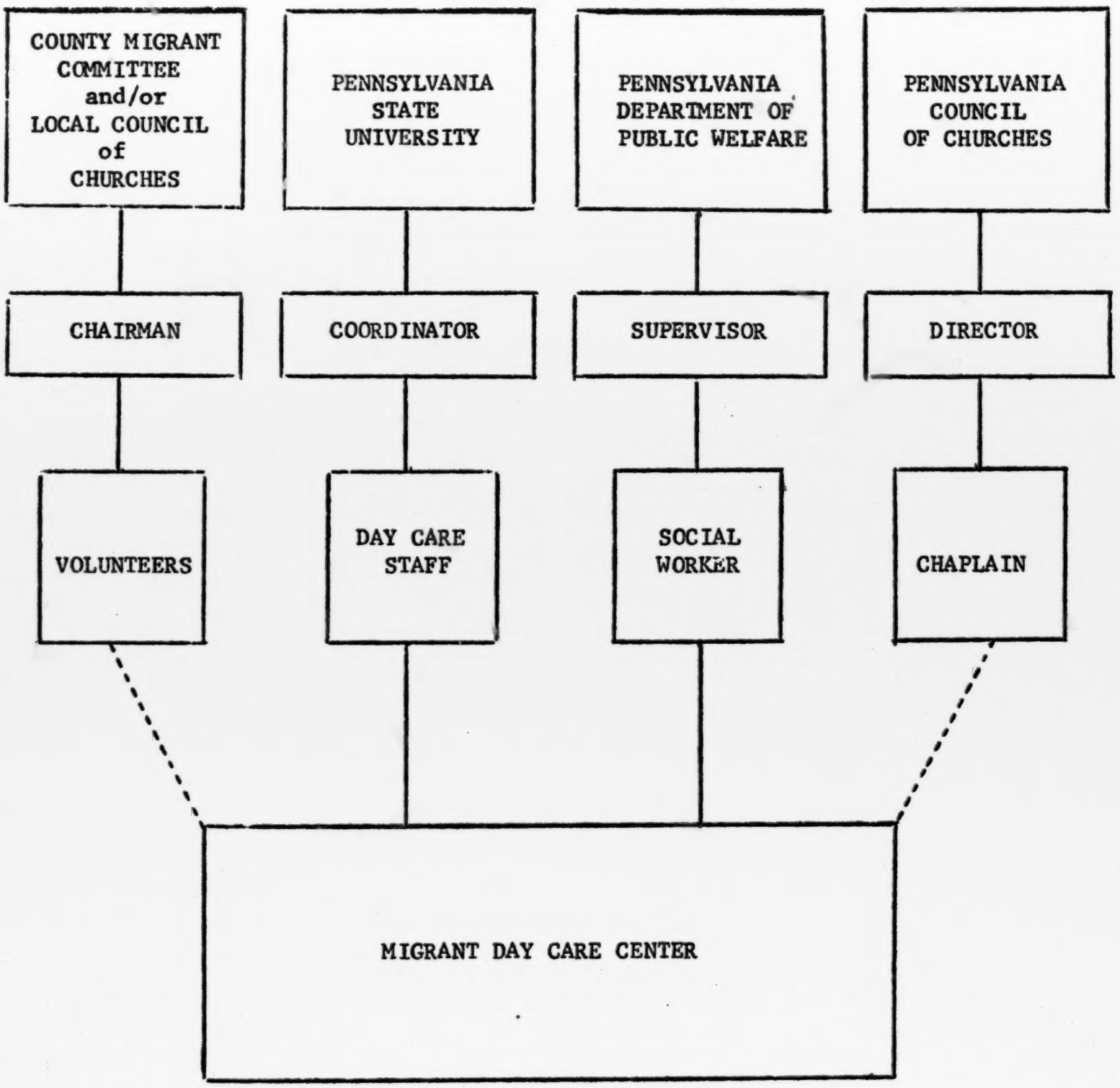
PENNSYLVANIA MIGRANT DAY CARE PROGRAM
and
PARTICIPATING AGENCIES



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Many groups work together to form and operate
a Migrant Day Care Center

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